

CLASSIFIED PROGRAM CELEBRATES 95 YEARS

In the early 1800s, Indiana was 85 percent forested. After decades of clearing for agriculture and to supply construction materials for Indiana's growing cities, the forests dwindled. By 1920, Indiana was only 6 percent forested, and there was concern it would become a treeless state. The Classified Forest Program was started in 1921 to bring forests back to the Indiana landscape. When the program began, landowners who wanted to participate only had to own 3 acres of land and promise to plant trees. The property tax benefit was \$1/acre assessment. There are still five tracts in the program that were enrolled in 1921: Blackford County (22.3 acres), Daviess County (9.9 acres), Gibson County (60 acres), Ripley County (40.4 acres) and Wayne County (81 acres).



Eroded farmland –early 20th Century.

DNR file photo

Now called the Classified Forest & Wildlands Program, the program is more popular than ever before. There are now more than 685,000 acres of woodland enrolled, plus 95,000 acres of wildlife habitat (shrubland, wetland, grassland).